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Dockets Management Branch
Food and Drug Administration
Dept. Of Health and Human Services
12420 Parklawn Drive, Room 1-23
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear FDA:

I am writing to urge that you grant the petition, filed under docket #98P-0203/CP, that would eliminate forced molting of hens used in egg production.

Molting is a normal occurrence for all birds. In the egg production industry, molting is a "problem" for egg producers because hens do not lay eggs during this period, which may be long and drawn out. The producers can shorten the molting period by subjecting the hens to forced molting. This is accomplished by subjecting the hens to starvation and deprivation of water. Hens are deprived of food for up to two weeks and often are deprived of water for up to three days.

Forced molting causes hens to endure extreme physiologic shock and suffering. Rapid forced molting results in a loss of 25 percent to 30 percent of body weight, and often results in the death of many hens.

Forced molting of hens increases the spread of Salmonella enteritidis infection, compromising the safety of consumers.

Please grant the petition, filed under docket #98P-0203/CP, that would ban this cruel, unhealthful practice.

Very truly yours,



Helen Knopoff

98P-0203

c673

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